**Social Studies 11 - Causes of WW1**

**Militarism:**

* Massive build-up of armaments and armies
* A nation’s policy of maintaining a strong military to defend or promote national interests
* Can be used to deter other countries from attacking
* Germany in particular.
* Other countries did the same in order to maintain the “balance of power”
* Germany had strongest army, most powerful arsenal of weapons in Europe
* Britain: Two-Power Standard: British navy must be equal or better than any two other navies combined at all times
* Naval race between Germany and England leading up to WWI
* Germany expanding its navy to compete with Britain in an arms race to have the best equipped military
* Britain builds the Dreadnought
* By 1914, both countries had huge fleets of warships
* All men aged 18-60 in Germany, England, France, Russia, and Italy were fully trained and prepared for service in the army
* Germany was not the largest army but was the best trained, equipment, medical supplies, discipline.
* Armed conflict was viewed as an acceptable solution to solving problems

**Alliances:**

* Countries that agree to provide assistance to one another if one is attacked/invaded
* Involves treaties and pacts with friendly nations
* Reduces vulnerability to attacks from other nations (deterrent)
* Triple Alliance (central powers): Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy
* Triple Entente (allies): France, Britain, Russia

**Imperialism:**

* National policy of conquest of other regions or peoples for the purpose of extending political and economic control (exploiting resources)
* Extending the rule of one country over another country or territories
* Resulted from industrialization – needed raw materials to supply factories, markets for their products
* Producing more than they could sell, needed market for their goods
* **Great Britain:** “the sun never sets on the British Empire” – strategic military/naval bases encircled the globe
* **France:** Western Hemisphere and Central Africa, main rival Germany. Feared Germany wanted to take over its colonies
* **Russia:** Promoted Pan-Slavism – unite the Slavic people of the Balkans – promote Slavic Nationalism
* Wanted to control a warm water port that was ice-free all year
* **Austria-Hungary:** Wanted to dominate the Balkans because it feared that Slavic Nationalism threatened its existence.
* Many ethnic groups linked to the Balkans in their territory
* Directly in the path of Russian aggression
* **Germany:** Southwest and East African colonies
* Not as economically desirable as those of France and Britain
* Felt it had to expand its holdings to become a great power – other countries feared German expansion
* Germany also wanted parts of Asia and the Pacific
* Belgium, Italy, and Germany had begun colonizing parts of Africa
* Africa was desirable because it was rich in resources such as gold, diamonds, ivory

**Nationalism:**

* Sense of national consciousness that one nation is above all others
* Pride for one’s country – “nation-statism”
* Desire to preserve language, religion, traditions
* 2nd type - exists within an ethnic group that doesn’t have its own country
* Desire to be liberated from a dominant ethnic group that is different
* This type led to the start of WW1 (Balkans) Austria-Hungary
* 11 different Slavic groups in Austria Hungary that wanted independence
* Bosnian Serbs known as the Black Hand wanted to free Bosnia from AH
* Pride in one's nation (What does this create?)

**Assassination:**

* With increasing tensions in Europe and countries trying to exploit as much territory as possible larger powers begin to infringe on each other creating aggression
* Austria-Hungary invades Bosnia which angers Serbian nationals who wanted Bosnia to be part of Serbia
* Became known as the “Powder Keg of Europe”
* Black Hand (Serbian nationalist group) gets involved
* June 28, 1914 – Archduke Ferdinand killed by Gavrilo Princip
* **Blank Cheque:** Germany would support Austria-Hungary even if it meant going to war
* Germany believed Britain would remain neutral if war broke out
* AH began to prepare for war with Serbia
* **Ultimatum:** told Serbia to hand over the terrorists or face war
* Serbia agreed to most conditions but asked for clarification which AH took as a rejection because they were looking for an excuse to go to war
* July 28, 1914 – Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia

**Chain of Events:**

* **Russia mobilizes to support Serbia** – believed Germany wanted to occupy the Balkans (Russia wanted the warm water port)
* **Germany declares war on Russia –** Germany demands that Russia demobilize, Russia doesn’t. Germany support Austria-Hungary
* **France supports Russia –** they had an alliance so France declares war
* **Germany declares war on France –** Germany felt threatened by France and Russia, ordered them to stop mobilizing, they refused, Germany declared war on France
* **Schlieffen Plan:**
* Germany plans to attack France through Belgium (neutral)
* Avoid two-front war with France and Russia
* Planned to use most of its army to defeat France within six weeks, then shift its attention to Russia in the East
* Assumed Russia would take six weeks to prepare for war
* Alfred Von Schlieffen assumed Britain would remain neutral and that Germany could pass through Beligium
* Belgian neutrality was guaranteed by Britain
* **Britain declares war on Germany –** World War 1 had begun!